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FIRST PERSON

Taekwondo Helps Drug Addict Kick Habit

Taekwondo saves a young man from drug addiction.



Photo: USAID/CCI

Nisar Ahmad (right) during Taekwondo practice.

“With the help of taekwondo training I totally stopped taking drugs. Now I live a normal and healthy life.”

- Nisar Ahmad, OTI Taekwondo Training Participant

April 2014 - In 2013 the Ministry of Public Health reported that approximately 100,000 people in Kandahar were addicted to illicit drugs. Despite the implementation of counter-narcotics programs in recent years, the number continues to rise. This has been attributed to a number of factors; loss of family members, unemployment, poverty and lack of education.

Nisar is from the volatile Kandahar district of Panjwai, where his father works as a shop keeper to support a large family. At 20 years of age, Nisar was sent to Kandahar City to improve his education and secure a job to help support the family.

Staying in a dormitory and studying at Kandahar Technical High School, Nisar soon found part-time work in a plastics factory. However, increasing family financial pressures and after befriending factory coworkers who used drugs, Nisar decided to try heroin. Alone in the city and separated from family, he slid deeper into the grip of drug addiction. “Friends and schoolmates urged me to change my ways and school officials were closely scrutinizing my behavior, but nothing worked. I stopped going to school and attending the job at the factory,” says Nisar.

Nasir’s outlook was bleak. However a good friend, aware of his predicament with drugs, suggested he join a taekwondo training course, recalling Nasir had talked of his dream to learn karate. He had never been able to afford the fee to go to local karate clubs, but a free Taekwondo Training Course was being offered by the Directorate of Sports and Olympic (DoSO). Nisar realized for the sake of his family and his future, he needed to change his life. Signing on as one of 100 participants, he made a personal commitment to a new start, and to stop taking drugs. By conclusion of the four month course in late March 2014, Nisar had achieved taekwondo second belt status. Personal willpower combined with valuable disciplines learned through the taekwondo training provided by the Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI), through DoSO, resulted in Nisar overcoming his drug addiction and being able to maintain his goal of a healthy lifestyle. He has now returned to school and is keen to continue training to become a sports instructor, to help support his family.